



GOVERNOR'S STATE WORKFORCE INVESTMENT BOARD

State of Montana

Brian Schweitzer, Governor

Issue 12

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March 2006

Committee Updates

Apprenticeship Advisory

March 16, 2006 the committee received an update on the status of a potential Lineman's College in Butte. They also discussed various aspects of a linkage between Business, Labor, and Education. Their next meeting, tentatively scheduled for April 13th, will have a few experts invited to assist in drafting an Articulation Agreement for Apprenticeship.

Economic Development

The next scheduled meeting is April 7, where possible projects will be discussed.

One-Stop Development

At the March 8, 2006 meeting, the committee discussed consortium agreements, One-Stop certification criteria, and the need for common definitions for One-Stops. On March 15th, they met and adopted general

definitions for the One-Stop System.

Workforce System

At the March 9, 2006 meeting, the committee discussed Career Clusters, the IPI project, Montana's historical WIA funding, and conferencing capabilities. The next meeting is set for May 11, 2006 in conjunction with the full Board meeting. ♣

State Workforce Board Chairs & Staff Winter Conference

The State Workforce Board Chairs and Staff Winter Conference was held in Washington, DC February 24–26, 2006. Some of the subjects covered were:

- Budget, Legislation & Reauthorization
- Emerging National Workforce Policy
- NGA Update

- Demographics of Skilled Workers

More information will be presented at the Full Board and Committee meetings as appropriate.

- Employability Credentials
- NAWB & Chairs Joint Session
- Skills employers need from entry-level & incumbent workers

Staff are working to determine what subjects may fit into the State Board's agenda. They will determine which items to suggest pursuing in Montana. ♣

WIA Unit Update by Kathy Yankoff

On Wednesday, March 1st, staff from Montana's WIA Unit traveled to Salt Lake City to meet with our counterparts from the Utah Department of Workforce Services. The purpose of the trip was two-fold: 1) It provided the Montana staff with information and best practice tools and procedures that have worked very successfully for WIA programs in Utah; and 2) It provided an opportunity for further

planning of Montana's Technical Assistance and Training (TAT) Sessions the end of March, which will include Utah staff as presenters.

We came away from the meeting with our Utah colleagues with some great ideas that will be presented at the TAT Sessions. Feedback will be solicited from those in attendance to help determine what we might

want to adopt or adapt for WIA in Montana.

The trip was made at the recommendation of USDOL Regional staff in Dallas; and that office covered all the costs for the one-day trip from their technical assistance and training budget. USDOL will also cover the Utah staffs' cost to support our TAT at the end of this month. ♣

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Upcoming Events:

March 17

St. Patrick's Day

March 27–28

Technical Assistance Training (TAT)
Billings—Billings Hotel Convention Center

March 30–31

Technical Assistance Training (TAT)
Missoula—Grant Creek Inn

April 7 (note date)

Economic Development Committee
2:00 PM, Conference Call
Helena State Capitol, Room 350

April 13 (tentative)

Apprenticeship Advisory Committee
Time and location TBD

May 11

Workforce System Committee
9:00 AM
Helena—TBD

May 11

One-Stop Development Committee
9:00 AM
Helena—TBD

May 11–12

SWIB
Helena—TBD

July 11–13

Workforce Innovations 2006
Annual Conference
Anaheim, CA



Montana Chamber Applauds Tax Ranking

by Webb Scott Brown, President/CEO, Montana Chamber of Commerce

The Montana Chamber of Commerce, the state's leading business advocate, today applauded a study by The Tax Foundation, listing Montana with the ninth best business tax climate in the nation. "We are tickled that Montana has not only received such a high mark," noted Webb Brown, President/CEO, "but that we actually moved up four notches in the list from the last such report."

The Tax Foundation completed similar studies in 2004 and 2003, with Montana moving up from 13th in those prior years. "We can definitely point to our efforts to reform the individual income tax as reason for the positive change," said Brown. In the 2003 and 2004 studies, Montana ranked 47th worst in the nation. Following such reform measures that just took effect this past year, Montana jumped all the way up to 21st in the country. Unfortunately, Montana lost ground in its corporate income

tax index, dropping two places, from 15th to 17th this year. Changes were negligible in the three other indexes: sales tax (current ranking 5th); unemployment insurance tax (24th); and wealth taxes (23rd).

The states in the top ten included two neighbors of Montana and four other Western states:



1. Wyoming
2. South Dakota
3. Alaska
4. Florida
5. Nevada
6. New Hampshire
7. Texas
8. Delaware
9. Montana
10. Oregon.

"Rather than rest on our laurels, we've still got work to do," said Brown. "We want to have the most business-friendly tax structure in America."

While this is good news, the study doesn't come without criticism. This year, the authors used a weighty system that puts most emphasis on individual income tax, then sales taxes, so Montana made big gains. The authors give more points to states with only two of three tax structures—business/corporate, individual, and sales taxes. Others would argue a more balanced approach with lower rates may be more preferred. The study also doesn't address property taxation.

"While we take all these studies with a grain of salt," added Brown, "we will definitely use this study as another tool for business recruitment. It shows the progress we have made in keeping Montana open for business."

The full study can be found at www.taxfoundation.org/publications/show/78.html. 🍀

Project Updates

by Chris Wilhelm

WIRED Grant

US DOL held a meeting in Washington, DC on February 22, 2006 for WIRED Grant recipients. Each recipient was given ten minutes to speak about their proposal.

The USDOL will be coming to Montana for an official 'Kick-Off'. The visit will happen some time in May at a sight that has yet to be determined. SWIB staff will keep you in the loop! 🍀



SHARE Network

SHARE stands for **Sharing How Access to Resources Empowers**. Montana has agreed to partner with the US Department of Labor (USDOL), being one of nine states to implement SHARE Network across the country. Through SHARE Network, Montana will launch both an online SHARE Network Resource Directory and targeted Access Points. The USDOL will provide license to the Resource Directory to Montana for two years, along with training in conducting outreach for the directory and developing access points.

Currently SWIB, WIA Unit, Job

Service Operations Bureau, and Workforce Technology Bureau staff are working to develop an Implementation Team for Montana. Efforts are being coordinated with Jim Morton and the 211 system. Implementation Team Training will occur in Helena some time in late April.

The Montana SHARE Network will utilize the JobLINC network of providers and the JobLINC logo. As new partnerships are made with Faith-Based and Community Organizations (FBCO), their information will be added to the network.

Staff will update you on this exciting project! 🍀

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